DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 286 401 HE 020 656

AUTHOR White, Voncile
TITLE Longitudinal Study of Catholic College Undergraduates' Affiliation and Faith Development.
PUB DATE Aug 86
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association (Washington, DC, August 22-26, 1986).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attendance; *Beliefs; *Catholic Schools; Church Related Colleges; *College Students; *Developmental Stages; Higher Education; Longitudinal Studies; *Participation; *Religion; Student Development

ABSTRACT

Faith stage development of Catholic college seniors was compared with their levels of denominational affiliation as a follow-up of a similar study of the students during their sophomore year. The students were male and female dormitory residents from the liberal arts and business schools of an eastern Catholic university. Affiliation was defined as the degree or level of participation in religious functions, while faith development was measured by the Fowler Faith Development Interview Guide, which indicates respondents' ways of shaping and interpreting meaning from their lives. Mean faith stage scores of high and low affiliates and interviews from 1984 and 1986 were compared. The group means for both years showed a modest trend toward "higher" more complex faith stage reasoning. Like most developmental theories, however, faith stage advancement is highly correlated with chronological maturity. Most students seemed to be in a transition that is likely to continue at least throughout young adulthood, according to Fowler's predictions. In Fowler's system, adulthood is heralded when one begins to construct stage four, Individuative Reflective Faith. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED286401

LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF CATHOLIC COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATES' AFFILIATION AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Voncile White, Ed.D.
School of Education
Division of Educational Foundations
BOSTON COLLEGE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Voncile White

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Presented at the 94th Annual Convention
of the
American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.
August 1986

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HE 020 656

LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF CATHOLIC COLLEGE

UNDERGRADUATES' AFFILIATION AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT

ABSTRACT This study is phase two of a longitudinal study. When high and low levels of denominational affiliation are compared with development toward more complex Stages of Faith (Fowler, 1981), is there a significant relationship? Mean faith stage scores (FSS) of the class of '86 taken in their sophomore year are compared to their scores in the senior year. Mean FSS of high and low affiliation groups in both years are examined and finally within subject faith stage is compared (1984 to 1986).

LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF CATHOLIC COLLEGE

UNDERGRADUATES' AFFILIATION AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Background

Although it is a widely held assumption that faith and denominational affiliation are the same, in fact, they are not. Exposure to and education in the dogmas of a particular tradition and participation in the public worship of the community associated with that tradition are vaults that safeguard faith commitment but are not equal to faith itself. Can faith develop independently of denominational affiliation? Are those who do not share in religious or worshipping communities without faith? Are those who have stronger ties and deeper commitments to religious observances likely to have higher and more complex forms of faith?

White (1985) explored these questions in an empirical investigation comparing faith stage development of Catholic college sophomores (Class of 1986) and seniors (class of 1984) with level of denominational affiliation. The study asks: **When high and low levels of denominational affiliation are compared with development toward more complex stages of faith, is there a significant relationship?**

The present study is longitudinal follow up of the Class of 1986 two years later.

METHOD

POPULATION

Phase I and Phase II (two year follow-up) were conducted on the campus of an eastern, coeducational Catholic university. Subjects, all dormitory residents, included men and women from the Liberal Arts and Business Schools.

INSTRUMENTS

Denominational affiliation is understood sociologically; affiliation, therefore, means the degree or level of participation in religious functions. White (1985) used a sociological questionnaire to measure denominational affiliation, and after discriminating groups of high and low affiliation, the 1986 study employs the same groups of high and low affiliates.

Faith Development is measured according to the theory developed by Fowler (1975, 1978, 1979, 1981). The Fowler Faith Development Interview Guide is an open-ended interview schedule designed to elicit responses which indicate respondents' "ways of shaping and interpreting meaning" from their lives (Fowler, 1981, p. 308).

Interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed and numbered by hired typists. A trained rater from the Center for Faith Development (Emory University, Atlanta, GA) coded interviews and calculated their faith stages. An interview **stage score** is obtained by totalling the number of stage assignments for all scorable responses and calculating the mean.

Finally, mean faith stage scores (FSS) of high and low affiliates; 1984 and 1986 interviews are compared.

RESULTS

Mean Faith Stage Score (FSS) for the class of '86 subjects at Phase I (1984) was 331.5882; their 1986 mean is 363.76923 indicating a moderate faith stage gain for the group. When separated into high and low affiliation groups, mean scores of the two groups do not seem to be significantly different in 1986: High affiliates - 365.285; Low affiliates - 362.00 (See Table A).

Both groups seem to have advanced during the two intervening years (See Table B).

DISCUSSION

The group means for both years showed a modest trend forward -- toward "higher" more complex faith stage reasoning. These data taken collectively are encouraging for anyone interested in college chaplainships and extrinsic influences on Catholic College undergraduates. Like most developmental theories, however, faith stage advancement is highly correlated with chronological maturity.

Three of the students interviewed reported having traveled abroad to study either during the summer for for two semesters. Several reported their sophomore years (the time of the original interviews) as a period of "crisis" or at least disequilibrium for them, and they saw themselves as having resolved many of those crises. One disquieting result is that one subject's (female) interview score <u>regressed</u> from first to second interview phase (1984: 3.8; 1986: 3.39). How much of this

TABLE A

FAITH STAGE SCORES BY HIGH AND LOW AFFILIATION GROUPS

1986

HIGH (n = 7)	LOW (n = 6)
324	325
334	339
357	339
366	372
377	384
380	413
410	

TABLE B

Mean Faith Stage Scores by Affiliation

1986

High Affiliates	Low Affiliates
365.28571	362.00

1986

High Affiliates	Low Affiliates
329.5	334.57143

++++++++++

discrepancy is due to inter-rater inconsistency remains to be examined. Most subjects, however, seem to be in transition which is likely to continue at least throughout young adulthood according to Fowler's own predictions. Parks (1977, 1980) argues that the discovery and management of dependence and independence constitute a vital part of the passage from adolescence to adulthood (White, 1985). In Fowler's system (19810 adulthood is heralded when one begins to construct stage four, Individuative Reflective faith, which may in many cases take one to two decades to complete!

LIST OF SOURCES

Fowler, J. W. (1975) Faith: The Developmental Perspective. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Divinity School. Research Project on Faith and Moral Development.

Fowler, J. W. (1979) Faith and the structuring of meaning. Mimeographed draft of a paper delivered in Symposium on Moral and Faith Development. Senaque, France. May-June.

Fowler, J. W. (1981) Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning. New York: Harper and Row.

Jarvis, D. and Fowler, J. (1983) A Manual for Scoring. Unpublished manuscript. Emory University, Center for Faith Development. Atlanta, GA.

Parks, S. L. (1977) Communities as ministry: An exploration in the role of community in undergraduate faith development. National Institute for Campus Ministers' Journal, 2(1).

Parks, S. L. (1980) Faith development and imagination in the context of higher education. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, MA.

White, V. (1985) Faith stages, affiliation, and gender: A study of the faith development of Catholic college undergraduates. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston University, Boston, MA.

FAITH STAGE SCORES OF

LONGITUDINAL FOLLOW-UP SAMPLE

SUBJECT #	1984 FSS	1986 FSS
07-22-64 -01 (F) lo	3.30	3.84
08-25-64 -03 (M) hi	3.5	3.57
07-03-64- 05 (F) lo	3.8	3.39
06-21-64 -06 (M) hi	3.10	3.43
09-28-64 -07 (F) hi	3.30	3.77
08-02-64 -11 (F) hi	3.20	3.80
04-18-64 -12 (F) lo	3.20	3.39
08-21-64 -18 (M) hi	3.34	4.10
10-06-64 -24 (F) hi	3.00	3.24
09-18-63 -26 (M) lo	3.71	3.72
08-31-64 -27 (F) lo	3.10	3.25
12-02-63 -29 (F) hi	3.00	3.66
08-12-64 -33 (M) lo	3.31	4.13

Total Females interviewed (1986) 8
Total Males interviewed (1986) 5 N = 13